

Safe Housing for Families Act

U.S. Senator Kamala D. Harris

Housing is a human right. Safe and affordable housing serves as the foundation for Americans' ability to maintain their physical and mental health, build communities, and pursue opportunities to build a better life for themselves and their families.

Yet too many families across the United States, facing the rising cost of living, cannot afford housing or find safe, affordable housing. The federal government and in particular the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has failed to live up to its obligation to ensure safe and hazard-free conditions for Americans living in public housing.

[Recent reports](#) revealed that carbon monoxide poisoning is threatening the health of public housing residents, leading to at least 11 deaths in HUD housing since 2003. Housing advocates and public health experts suggest that in spite of the clear dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, HUD has been slow to provide protections for these families. In some cases, the health and safety hazards are so severe that residents in affected areas are forced out of their homes.

The Safe Housing for Families Act would require that HUD provide carbon monoxide detectors in public housing units. It would protect low-income residents from carbon monoxide poisoning and help prevent deaths in millions of homes across the country.

More than 400 people die in the United States each year due to carbon monoxide poisoning, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A majority of the 4.6 million families receiving public housing assistance from HUD are people with disabilities, elderly, or families with young children, making them especially vulnerable to toxic environments.